

Erik Glavich

Director, Legal & Regulatory Policy
Infrastructure, Legal & Regulatory Policy

June 17, 2015

The Honorable Joe Pitts
Chairman
Subcommittee on Health
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gene Green
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Health
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pitts and Ranking Member Green,

On behalf of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), the largest manufacturing association in the United States representing manufacturers in every industrial sector and in all 50 states, I am writing to express support for H.R. 1599, the Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act of 2015. Introduced by Representatives Mike Pompeo (R-KS) and G.K. Butterfield (D-NC), H.R. 1599 is a bipartisan, commonsense measure that would establish uniformity in food and beverage labeling and ensure the labeling of products addresses health and consumer safety concerns.

Manufacturers are pleased that the Subcommittee on Health is examining labeling regulations for food products or foods containing ingredients derived from biotechnology (genetically modified organisms or GMOs) and their impact on interstate commerce and consumers. There is no federal labeling standard that directly applies to GMO foods, and as states consider their own GMO labeling standards, a myriad of conflicting state standards would greatly harm the ability of manufacturers, suppliers, distributors and farmers to efficiently produce and transport agricultural and food products. This would dramatically increase costs for both producers and consumers.

We are encouraged that the Subcommittee will review a draft substitute to H.R. 1599 and urge Congress to quickly pass this critical legislation. The Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act would provide the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)—the nation's foremost food safety agency—with the authority it needs to establish voluntary standards for GMO foods and to require mandatory labeling of those products if they are found to be unsafe or materially different from foods produced without GMOs. The legislation would ensure that federal policies on food labeling protect consumers and allow them to make the best food and beverage choices for their families. H.R. 1599 would increase coordination between FDA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to further ensure the safety of GMO agricultural and food products. The legislation also would establish a transparent, consistent GMO-free certification program, bringing clarity to consumers who choose to purchase GMO-free foods.

Manufacturers are critically important to the success of the federal government's domestic and global feeding and nutrition programs. The food and beverage industry contributes billions in food, supplies and money to combat hunger and malnutrition in the U.S. and around the world. Biotechnology has fostered a revolution in American agriculture that has

Leading Innovation. Creating Opportunity. Pursuing Progress.

benefitted consumers in the U.S. and around the world. GMOs enable America's food producers to more efficiently use resources and allow farmers to withstand crippling droughts and ward off disease or pestilence.

The Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act will advance a federal policy that ensures a safe and affordable food supply while supporting biotechnology research and development by manufacturers in the U.S. Thank you for your leadership on this issue and your continued commitment to protect public health and safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'C' followed by a large loop and a final flourish.